

DIIME **DRUG INDUSTRY IMMUNITY MUST END**

RxVICTIMS.COM coalition convened by Michigan Citizen Action

VICKI CHAMBERLAIN

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TORT REFORM
June 20, 2006

- Thank you, Chairman. My name is Vicki Chamberlain.
- I speak to you today as someone whose life – and the lives of those around me – was changed forever by a drug that my doctor and I were told was safe.
- As you know, Michigan is the only state in America with a special law that protects the drug industry from being held accountable for its products.
- In years past, if a drug company sold a harmful drug, the citizens of Michigan could seek remedies for harm caused them.
- But that option was banned by our state legislature in 1996.
- The pharmaceutical giants wanted us to believe that this law was a good one.
- But good for whom? The ordinary everyday citizen of Michigan? Or the drug industry?
- I have spent a lifetime believing that good government means doing the right thing to protect the citizens.
- This law protects not the citizens, but one specific industry – and from what? Simple accountability.

MICHIGAN CITIZEN ACTION

729 Academy St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269-349-9170

220 Bagley St., Suite 948
Detroit, MI
313-963-4260

336 W. First St. Suite 103
Flint, MI 48502

- I myself have been affected by the use of a drug that was rushed to market by a company that engaged in an all-out campaign to hide its dangers.
- I was having severe pain from arthritis, so my doctor gave me the prescription drug Vioxx.
- By using this drug, I was supposed to be able to continue working, to be a citizen contributing something of value to my employer.
- However, because of my use of Vioxx, I suffered a stroke, which robbed me of my life as I knew it.
- I was forced to retire from my job.
- I became unable to take care of myself and my home, which has created a burden for my children.
- My stroke has also made it more difficult for me to contribute to my community the way that I used to.
- For someone as active as I was before my stroke, I can tell you that this is very difficult for me.
- Amazingly, under current Michigan law, I can't even ask questions about how this happened.
- Supposedly, removing accountability for the drug companies was for the good of the citizens of Michigan.
- But who's picking up the tab for the sale and use of dangerous drugs?
- Who's paying for the overburdened medical facilities?
- Who's paying for the doctors visits that so many of us cannot afford on our own?
- Who's paying for the increased use of other drugs – drugs we now need as a result of the use of a dangerous one?
- Who's paying for the loss of productivity that dangerous drugs cause?
- We all are paying.
- In ways that we cannot begin to calculate, the drug industry immunity law has been bad for Michigan.
- The economic toll has been high, to be sure.

- The human toll has been worse.
 - If we want to keep the people of Michigan as healthy and productive as possible, we must return to some basic accountability for the corporations that manufacture and sell their highly profitable drugs.
 - Representative Gaffney's legislation, House Bill 5527, does just that.
 - This bill deserves not only this committee's support, but, at long last, an up-or-down vote on the House floor.
 - I hope you will take this opportunity to do the right thing -- for the people of Michigan.
 - I hope you will take real action, now, to repeal drug industry immunity.
- The destruction of a person's life should not be protected by government.

Thank you.

Submitted by
Vicki Chamberlain
300 East Syringa Dr.
Lansing, MI 48910